

# Dimensions



A publication for the Employees and Friends of VASDHS

December 2005 - January 2006



## *A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Hemodialysis Center*

*by Vicky Seamon*

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The Renal Team is happy to announce that our new Hemodialysis Center will soon be completed!

The Hemodialysis unit, which opened on 3 East in April 1972, reached its maximum capacity several years ago. In the last fiscal year, the unit provided 9,328 hemodialysis treatments and 64 peritoneal training/clinic visits. The new, more spacious facility on 3 West will continue to offer chronic and acute hemodialysis treatments as well as home peritoneal dialysis training and clinic services.

The new unit is a careful balance of openness and privacy. While the treatment area is quite large, serving up to 20 patients at one time, stations are divided into smaller groups of four or five patients. Grouping the patients in this manner gives the sense of smaller, more intimate spaces and encourages socializing among patients. At the same time, the unit's open configuration allows all patients to be observed from a single nurse station. Throughout the unit, lighting is used to enhance the

design and maximize patient comfort. All treatment stations have multiple lighting options to increase each patient's level of comfort, and minimize glare for reclining patients.

The expanded unit will be equipped with new Fresenius K machines. The new machines will enable the renal team to monitor the adequacy of each treatment and measure the blood flow through the renal access. The new unit has a state-of-the-art, centralized water treatment and dialysate delivery system. Where we once had to deal with mixing, splashing and hauling heavy jugs of solution from the back room down the hall to the dialysis unit, we can now just flip a switch - well, not quite, but Igor Bronshteyn, the Hemodialysis Biomedical Technician, assures us that the new system will be easier to work with and much more efficient. A patient lift system has also been installed, which will provide a safer environment for both staff and patients.

We look forward to showing off our new 21<sup>st</sup> century unit when we hold the grand opening very soon.

## *Happy Holidays*



# Spotlight on Trans Fat

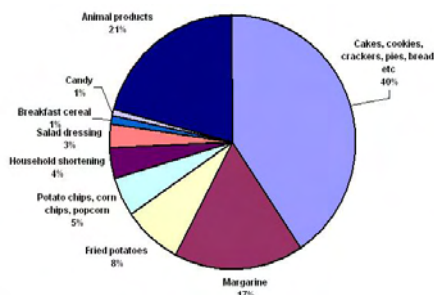
by Jocelyn George, RD

**T**rans fat is the byproduct of hydrogenation – a process that turns a liquid oil into a solid fat. Hydrogenation increases the shelf life and flavor of foods.

Trans fat has been shown to raise your bad (LDL) cholesterol, lower the good (HDL) and overall increases your heart disease risk.

Where is it found? Mostly in crackers, cookies, baked goods, processed foods. Read the ingredient list for “Hydrogenated” or “Partially Hydrogenated” & avoid these products. In 2006, trans fat will be added to the nutrition label.

## Major Food Sources of Trans Fat for American Adults (Average Daily Trans Fat Intake is 5.8 Grams or 2.6 Percent Calories)



Reference: *FDA Consumer magazine*. September-October 2003 Issue

## FROM THE STAFF

*Dimensions* is a bimonthly publication of the VA San Diego Healthcare System. Your suggestions, contributions, and photos are most welcome. Submissions for the February - March 2006 issue are due Jan 5, 2006

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## VASDHS Holiday Celebration

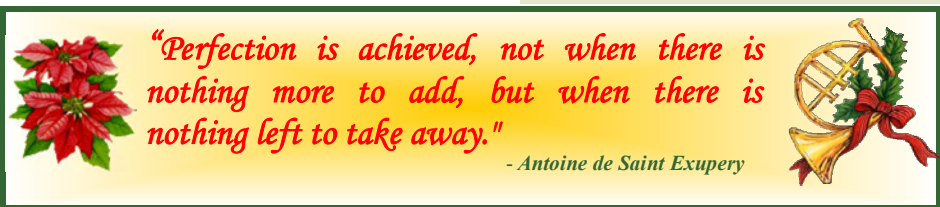
The following is the employee holiday celebration schedule:

December 5, 2005 - Chula Vista  
Clinic, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.;  
WAVE Clinic, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

December 6, 2005 - Vista Clinic  
12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

December 7, 2005 - Mission Valley  
Clinic, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

December 13, 2005 - VASDHS  
(Multipurpose Room)  
7:30 - 8:30 a.m. &  
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.



## SOARS Team Visited VASDHS

by Jean Sobczak

**V**ASDHS was recently visited by System-Wide Ongoing Assessment and Review Strategy (SOARS) team, October 25-28, 2005. The SOARS team provided an assessment and educational consultation to our facility, assisting us in preparation for our upcoming VA OIG Combined Assessment Program site visit (January 23-27, 2006) and other ongoing regulatory visits, including JCAHO. Although the

SOARS review identified some opportunities for improvement, team leader Jeff Bellah said this of their visit: “There is much to be proud of at the San Diego organization. We were particularly impressed with the obvious quality improvement culture, the enthusiasm of staff to learn and improve, and leadership involvement in key areas such as patient safety”. Congratulations to everyone who made this visit a success!

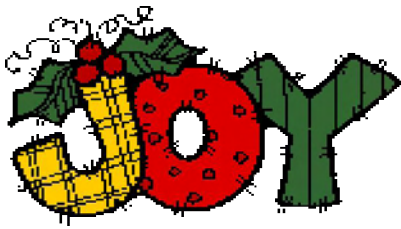


## A New PET Scanner...Finally!

by Terry O'Toole, MD

After years of effort, the VASDHS will soon have its own PET (Positron Emission Tomography) scanner. The new \$2.2 million addition, known for being the "Gold Standard" in metabolic imaging, will be located on 4 West after a short period of construction. It will be operated and staffed un-

der the guidance of Dr. Ernest Belezzuoli, Chief, Nuclear Medicine Service. The new equipment will improve our ability to diagnose diseases more completely and, in some cases, even more promptly. If all goes as planned, the PET scanner should be operational in the first half of 2006.



## Research Opportunities for Returning Combat Veterans

by Dewleen Baker, MD

Troops returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan are at risk for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). VASDHS is actively studying the long-term health effects of PTSD. One study, addressing health habits, is looking at the most effective way to provide smoking cessation treatment in PTSD veterans of all war eras, and another study, designed to determine whether PTSD is associated with inflammation leading to heart disease. VASDHS is seeking OEF/OIF combat veterans with and without PTSD. For more information please call (619) 400-5176, or (858) 761-5113 after working hours. OEF/OIF veterans are also being sought for a study of the genetic risk factors for PTSD.

## Nursing Research Funded for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Veterans

by Jill Borman

With ongoing war in Iraq, there is a greater need for research on interventions for managing symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Jill Bormann, Ph.D., RN, Research Scientist, received VA HSR&D funding through the Nursing Research Initiative (\$589,499) to conduct a 4-year study on the effects of an innovative, nonpharmacological, mind-body-spiritual intervention of frequent, silent mantram repetition (also called "rapid relaxation response") for managing PTSD symptoms and improving quality of life. Several pilot studies have shown that the mantram program is associated with reductions in stress, anxiety, and anger, and improvements in quality of life and spiritual well-being in veterans and employees. Co-investigators include Murray

Stein, MD, MPH; Steven Thorp, Ph.D., Julie Wetherell, Ph.D., Ariel Lang, Ph.D., Shah Golshan, Ph.D. Collaborators include Dilip Jeste, MD, and Jeffry Matloff, Ph.D.

This study is an effort to provide a more immediate aid for managing intrusive thoughts and flashbacks from PTSD. Study recruitment begins the end



of the year and will continue through 2007. Veterans must be enrolled in the PTSD outpatient clinic in Mission Valley and have a case manager. For more information, contact Study Coordinator, Patricia Bone, BS, RN at 858-552-8585 x2286. To learn more about regularly offered mantram courses for veterans, their families, and VA employees, contact Robert West at 858-552-8585 x2649.





# Events & Awards



## National Disabilities Awareness Month



VASDHS celebrated National Disabilities Awareness month. This year's slogan was "Workers with Disabilities: Ready for Tomorrow's Job Today." VASDHS hosted an awareness event on Thursday, October 20, 2005. Coming together to make the event a great success was Prosthetic Service, Audio Service, Wave Clinic, Human Resources, Visual Impairment, SCI Recreational Therapist and the State Department of Rehabilitation; as a result VASDHS employee participation was greater than any other year.



## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

The Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration took place on October 6, 2005 in the Multipurpose Room. Guest Speaker Greg Sandoval gave a presentation on education. Live music and nachos were provided. Special thanks to the Hispanic Employment Program members who worked very hard on the arrangements for this program.



*Hispanic Heritage Month*



## Outreach Program - Miramar Air Show



*Ray Wright, TAP Coordinator*

VASDHS hosted a booth at Miramar Air Show. This is a three-day event held on October 14, 15, & 16, 2005. More than 700 health care information brochures were distributed. The booth handed out approximately 25-30 new enrollment packets, answered a variety of benefit questions, and promoted healthcare services.

## Veterans Day & U.S. Marine Corps 230th Birthday Celebration



*USMC 230th Birthday Cake Cutting Ceremony*

VASDHS celebrated Veterans Day and U.S. Marine Corps 230th Birthday. A cake cutting ceremony was held on November 8, 2005 in the Multipurpose room. The event was sponsored by U.S. Marine Corps and VA Voluntary Service Committee.



## Penny Schoenmehl Award Winner 2005



*Kathy Ober, NP, Ph. D*

The 2005 Penny Schoenmehl Award winner is Kathy Ober, NP, Ph.D.

This coveted award signifies excellence, caring and compassion for both patients and peers. Ober practices as an NP in Firm and is the coordinator of the new MOVE program for VASDHS and VISN 22.